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MR. Ben-Gurion spoke sharply as ever in the Knesset yesterday, and members of all parties must have been relieved to see that he had recovered entirely from his recent injuries.

The issues that were dealt with on this occasion—the alleged kidnapping of a Tel Aviv reporter last week, attributed by his editor to the Shin Bet (Security Services), and the Emergency Regulations providing for administrative detention and orders to leave a certain locality where the security of the State is deemed to require this—were both totally artificial, in the sense that none of the motions expected debates on either subject, but sought an official platform from which to make their own statements on these subjects. Mr. Ben-Gurion, as Minister of Defence, is directly responsible for the Shin Bet and said in a Knesset speech in reply to a question that it was not correct that this government service had kidnapped Mr. Tabor, although he was not yet in a position to say just who had done so or who had, alternatively, staged the kidnapping. He replied at greater length to the second issue, pointing out that each case, as it occurred, had been treated in the Knesset in turn, that the law was dictated by the exceptionally difficult security position in which Israel finds itself, and that details of the reasons for administrative detentions could be discussed only in the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee, "which has the wonderful quality that people speak only to the point of agreement on the proposed discussion in the Foreign Affairs Committee, on which all parties except the Communists are represented, with no one opposing the decision, and only Herut and the Communists, both of whom had helped sponsor the motion, abstaining."

The significance of the day lay wholly in the indication that it gave the Coalition its discipline, almost 18 months before the next elections are due, although Israel can ill afford at this stage to cripple itself by weakening its Government and paralysing its own capacity for action. It seems quite incredible that two coalitions, factions, Mapam and Ahud Ha'avoda, including the Cabinet Ministers, should support the view that the sports and cinema expert of a sensation-mongering magazine aimed at adolescents was indeed kidnapped by a branch of the State's Ministry of Defence, as he claims, despite the fact that this service had shortly before been characterized by the Prime Minister as one which "does us credit and whose work is a blessing." Were the members of the two left-wing groups really giving credence to the story that the Shin Bet would be driven to kidnapping a harmless Tel Aviv youth and walking him miles cross-country in order to find a place to ask him some questions, mainly about his family, but also about the political affiliations of persons connected with his paper, if his account is to be credited? Should Cabinet Members, really follow a hare started up by what will inevitably prove to be a new and original form of anti-Ministerial propaganda, regardless of what specific interests may turn out to have been involved?

It is serious enough that grave conflicts have suddenly developed with the religious parties within the Government, but these conflicts are at least genuine and inescapable, and involve matters of conscience of the utmost importance to both sides in the dispute. The creation of this new issue by supporters of the left-wing, in support of the left-wing against the Shin Bet, is sheer irresponsibility.

Russia Traps Syria

By PHILIP GUYELIN, DAMASCUS

It would be funny if it weren't so sad.

That's how a Western diplomat views the current Syrian drama, with its comic opera plots and its high-minded "heroes." What makes it funny is that the Syrian and most other Westerners here are the strong suspicion that it's carrying leftward-plunging Syria rapidly past the point of no return from Soviet bondage.

If these observers are right, the tragedy widens far beyond this contentious and deluded country, for Syria was quickly become the key to Russia's strategy throughout the Middle East, more important in the minds of many experts than Egypt and high-ranking officials in Cairo. Radio leads the propaganda war on King Hussein, for example, but the more sinister threat to the young king comes from here in neighbouring Syria, a convenient staging base for subversion and a historic rallying point for vast numbers of Jordanians who quickly became the key to Russia's strategy throughout the Middle East, more important in the minds of many experts than Egypt and high-ranking officials in Cairo.

How did the Syrians get into their Russian bind? For one thing, they are either seemingly unaware that they are being used or they are too clever to be duped by Communism.

"You were not doubt surprised to find that our streets are not full of Russians," said the smiling young Syrian intelligence captain, with smug assurance as he handed over this correspondent's camera, seized earlier that day by a squad of army officers. The crime: Snapshots from a hotel window of scenery that included the early morning exercises of a company of army recruits in a nearby drill square.

Government's Grip
 Syria's politicians, including the clever and powerful Socialist leader Akram Hourani, speaker of parliament, seem equally confident that the Soviet economic aid programme, unlike Western aid proffers, is "completely without strings or conditions of any kind."

Mr. Hourani and his cohorts are rubbing ahead with plans for tightening the government's grip on the economy, including a new cotton law to give the government more power over exports of that key Syrian crop.

One aim of these moves is to redirect more and more Syrian trade toward the Soviet bloc—the proportion had risen from seven to 25 per cent in the past year—with the idea of reaching a 50-50 split of Syrian imports and exports between East and West.

True, the Russians have given the Syrians so far little apparent reason for fear. The Soviets are charging only 25 per cent interest on credits adding up to about the ruble equivalent of \$180m. for machinery, technical aid and other goods and services to be supplied over the next seven years and paid for in instalments over the next 20 years. "But Western analysts who have combed the text of the Syrian-Soviet aid pact have come up with more than enough loopholes for the U.S.S.R. and enough fine print to give the Soviets the last word on whether any of the 19 power, irrigation, land reclamation, bridge and railroad building and industrial projects are ever completed. The deadline is firm for any one project and each is contracted for individually."

KEEPING POSTED

OUR private spy in Amman reports that the time-honoured red-chequered keffiyeh of the Jordan Arab Legion has been abolished by decree, and is to be replaced by a khaki-style khaki beret for ordinary members of the force, black berets for the armoured corps and blue for the air force, which is the regular convention. After all, the Legion received some useful modern weapons from the United States lately, and the old red and white khaki cloth arrangement probably tended to catch in the covers of the tank turrets or entwine themselves maddeningly round a bayonet as soon as there was a stiff wind blowing. The keffiyehs were fine in the days of long jaunts on camel-back through the Trans-Jordan desert, but they don't belong in motorized columns. There is only one curious point about the change. It is explained in Amman not as a desire for modernization, but as the wish to divest itself of the last shreds of British influence in the Legion. Pease Pasha, the British officer who founded the organization, proposed that its members stick to the romantic and traditional Arab head-dress, and Glubb Pasha, who was more remarkable still always liked to think that his soldiers looked quite different to

anything the West could produce. It is in order to emancipate themselves from this British ideology of the "primitive sons of the desert," that the Legion has now adopted the British beret, having worn British uniforms and the dress for a number of years.

A FRIEND tells us a curious little incident that occurred Mr. Dag Hammarskjöld's last visit to Jerusalem. He was taking his dog for a walk in the rose street that passes the back of the President's House, and stopped to watch Mr. Hammarskjöld—whom he knew only from his photographs—come out of the house and prepare to enter a waiting U.N. car. A couple of kids from a neighbouring kindergarten, having come to know that every now and again colourful diplomats inspect guards of honour there, and hoping for a little music, a Japanese kimono, a Naval guard, or at least a shiny police horse to break the boredom of kindergarten songs. They took a look at the First Diplomat of the world of the future, failed to identify him as anyone of consequence, and paid no attention. Mr. Hammarskjöld, however, was greeted by the boys, but they only stared morosely and turned to inspect the car. Mr. Hammarskjöld waved again. The children trailed off. Our friend says he felt ashamed at their lack of cordiality and manners. On an unexplained impulse he waved back himself, the Secretary-General of the United Nations looked astonished, but smiled and nodded politely before hurrying into his car to get away from those pesky people.

SOVIET ECONOMIC GRIP WILL TIGHTEN

Thus the Russians can fix the timetable on a given project, slowing it on almost any pretext, delaying deliveries or speeding them according to their mood.

Arbitrary Price Fixing
 Item: Although interest rates are low, the size of each credit hinges on the value of goods and services furnished and prices, the agreement specifies will be based on "world market prices." Since few of the Russian items involved are traded much on the world market, it's assumed that gives the Russians freedom to set the price of the contribution of materials and manpower almost arbitrarily.

Item: Syrian government officials insist that the arrangement is "strictly commercial" but all specifications, blueprints and technical details must be made by Russia's government-run industries, more or less effectively ruling out the possibility that the Syrians might use their trading talents to shop around for lower bids or otherwise better deals, though technically, Syrian officials insist they will be able to do so.

Item: The whole deal in rubles calculated at the official rate of rubles to the dollar, though the free market rate is closer to seven or eight rubles to the dollar and repayment of the rubles is specified as "freely convertible exchange," a provision which will enable the Syrians to effect trade overvalued for their own benefit.

Item: Although Syrian officials are unworried, the aid programme will, as one Westerner puts it, "open the door" to Soviet technicians, economists and other experts by the score to roam over every inch of Syria on geological surveys and mapping projects which will provide convenient cover for Soviet agents with interests in neighbouring Jordan, Lebanon or Iraq.

Syria's Outlay
 Finally, there is the hard fact that the Syrians themselves must contribute well over a seven-year span to pay for their part of the deal. One expert here figures this means total outlays of 230m. Syrian pounds for the project, including their own contribution to the development programme plus principal and interest payments to the Soviets. He notes that Syria's World Bank study of Syrian economic affairs in 1955 concluded Syria could at the most afford annual outlays of 164m. pounds on economic development, assuming a deficit spending of 75m. pounds a year. Since no less an authority than Chief of Staff Gen. Buzi puts present defence outlays at 120m. a year, the figure that may even be conservative—many observers

polished, and if the rain had not driven me home again after a short hour of watery sunning, I expect I should have found the other little bulb plant beginning to bloom, too, which to me heralds the good time of the Meadow Saffron (Crocus stevensii-Stavanti hayoreh). This lilac-pinkish crocus will soon form pools of colour between the rocks, for it is not by seed but by vegetative bulblets, the mother bulb producing countless little bulblets in its upper part, and this accounts for its coming up in such close company. The flowers are stemmed, and its colour is no-thing to write home about either, being too pale for show in a vase. But it looks good in its natural surroundings. P.A.

Nature Notes

First Sign of Spring

WELL, I have found the first autumn aqil (Scilla autumnalis—Ben Khatwatani). It is not so much to look for, but it is a few inches high only, its little stars on their loose raceme washed-out blue. But in spite of its name, it is actually the first sign of the "Spring of Winter."

I had gone out in the hope of finding something after the first terrific cloud-bursts and thunderstorms we had in the north a couple of weeks ago, and the Betan (the plant community of the limestone hills) was indeed beginning to come to life. It was getting quite green underfoot with new grass. The evergreen firs with their dry, dark green leaves had been washed and

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anything the West could produce. It is in order to emancipate themselves from this British ideology of the "primitive sons of the desert," that the Legion has now adopted the British beret, having worn British uniforms and the dress for a number of years.

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YESTERDAY'S PRESS

Military Rule Outdated

Ha'aretz (non-party) finds that there is no justification for prolonging military rule in the Arab areas solely for political reasons, especially in a democratic country. It says that the military rule is outdated and that the government should take action to end it. The article also mentions that the military rule is a hindrance to the economic development of the Arab areas and that it is a source of tension between the Jewish and Arab communities.

Herut writes that on his return from his speaking tour abroad, particularly in South Africa and Rhodesia, Menachem Begin, the Herut Movement leader, will be greeted not only by his ardent followers but also by wide circles of the Israeli public who are patently dismayed at the impotence of present-day State leadership and who see in Herut the only force that will ultimately bring about a change in the State on the high-road to dynamic nationhood.

Al-Hamishmar (Mapam) calls for an airing in the Knesset of the Israeli delegation voting with the U.S. against the Japanese draft resolution calling for a stop to A-tests. Assuming that the delegation is not under the influence of Ministry instructions, the paper insists that the Foreign Minister explain publicly the reasons for this vote. The article also mentions that the delegation's vote is a reflection of the Israeli government's policy towards the Soviet Union and the Middle East.

Readers' Letters

TOURISM
 Editor, The Jerusalem Post
 Sir: On the topic of tourism, I, an American citizen residing temporarily in Israel, I spent my vacation in the Swiss Paradise, in internationally renowned places like Interlaken and Ascona, at the peak of the season. In not luxurious but certainly first class hotels, I had rooms with private bath and board; food, service, and everything else was perfect. The price per day was 24 Swiss Francs (about IL12 at the official rate of exchange).

Shortly after my return to Israel, I spent a day in the Guest House of a well known kibbutz. There I had a very small room with running water, a simple bed, chair, closet, light, and a small table. The price per day was 24 Swiss Francs (about IL12 at the official rate of exchange).

The same goes for hotels of all grades in Israel. Accommodation at from IL16 to 25 is not as good as what can be had in Switzerland. The crux of the matter is the official unrealistic and prohibitive exchange rate. By good luck I slept alone; the bulk of potential tourists is made up of upper middle class visitors. These are the people who work hard all month, a year in order to spend one month's time and income on their annual "time of their lives." One meets these millions of vacationists of all creeds and nationalities on all vacation roads. They are prepared and ready to spend good money to know new lands, to hear new languages, to see new people, to widen their horizons, and at the same time looking for efficiency, cleanliness, and calculation. Nobody buys Israeli raincoats and oranges for friendship's sake, and the promoters of Israeli tourism must not expect success on the basis of any sentimentalities. They have to look twice at what they have to offer before looking five times at what they hope to take.

Mr. Traveller consults his tourist agent before deciding where to buy his best vacation at reasonable prices. Nobody can be expected to pay for inferior accommodation money that can buy first-class conveniences elsewhere. Acquaintances of mine came to Israel from South America, some weeks ago. They are well-to-do people willing to spend some good money, but much good hard currency.

Personal Compensation from Germany

Damage to the Practices and Goodwill of Professional Workers "Freie Berufe"

The German authorities have decided on the payments of compensation to Professional Workers for the losses in their practices and business affairs as a result of Nazi persecution, these being considered as part of a person's possessions, the loss of which entitles a claimant to compensation.

The attention of claimants is hereby drawn to the fact that all claims must be based on authentic statements. Failing this, the claimant is liable to lose his rights to be compensated. The final date for submitting claims in Germany is March 31, 1958.

In accordance with the above, the following are entitled to claim compensation: all Doctors, Auditors, Agents, Economic Advisers, Architects, etc., who were in practice in Germany—within her 1937 borders—and whose practices suffered under Nazi persecution. In certain cases compensation will be paid to the above (up to a limit of 75,000 D-Marks) in addition to compensation received for loss or damage of profession.

The right for compensation is inheritable and can be claimed by the legal heirs.

Capital's Building Problems

Expensive Stone Has Many Compensations

By MAC KASKIN, Jerusalem Post Reporter
 JERUSALEM is a city of stone, a material that is heavy, worked with difficulty, and costly. But it is durable, gracious and beautiful. Used properly in building and treated with ordinary care, it will become a milestone in human history, often outliving the race which quarried it, dressed it and built with it.

Although no building in the New City of Jerusalem is more than 101 years old—for the Jews only left the shelter of the Old City in 1856 to build outside its walls—Israel itself is dotted with buildings hundreds of years old, dating back to the Crusaders and to the Second Temple.

The first quarry outside the Old City Walls was Yemin Moshe. Like the quarries which were to follow it, it was built of stone. Under a series of by-laws passed in Jerusalem, at the behest of Sir Ronald Storrs, it was forbidden to build in any other material than stone. Today, in the main body of the New City—but not in its suburbs—only stone may be used.

Immediately after the War of Independence, however, certain quarters of the city, mainly Katamon, the Greek Colony and Talpote, were marked with concrete houses thrown up by the Ministry of Labour's Housing Division. Despite the lovely quality of the stone, the Government, in its attempt to appease the Arabs at our expense, will only be taken for a sign of weakness and will solve nothing for the region's "basic problems" would still be there even if Israel did not exist.

Lamerhavi (Ahud Ha'avoda) attacks the joint statement of the Israel and French Communist Parties. Ma'ariv wonders whether we ourselves are not to be blamed for the sudden propaganda for Israel concessions. We had shown the Arabs that we could put them out of the running, and proved that we were not altogether without friends in a hostile world; but by placing too much emphasis on our call for guarantees, we have given the Russian bear from his slumber and induced British and pro-Arab State Department officials to con- sider that we needed the guarantees and were amenable to giving in under pressure. We must drop yesterday's slogan calling for imaginary guarantees, so as not to invite intervention along our borders.

The result: Kastel can produce a square metre of stone at IL20; it costs only IL13 to IL14 a square metre to quarry Galilee stone, dress it and bring it to Jerusalem. This explains why much of Jerusalem is built of "imported" stone. It also explains why the 50-60 men employed in quarrying at Kastel look with favour when unemployed stone dressers stage demonstrations against the Galilee stone. But "Even Vesid" has one great competitive advantage: the Kastel plant is highly mechanized, turning out a more uniform product. Constructors of public buildings, where the outside appearance is highly important and the stone work is spot and from the Kastel. This stone is very hard, and excellent for a "random" arrangement of stones. Kastel provides some of the huge smooth grey plates which are plastered against the concrete outer walls of many buildings, giving them a smooth "sophisticated" look. It also provides another type of grey slab, this slab, which is thinner and polished, for covering the inner walls, floors, steps and columns.

From nearby Givat Shaul Bet, the University obtains a special type of heavy stone slab which is used for paving its campus paths. A quarry near Wadi Ramon provides an ochre stone used to cover inner walls. A very soft stone, its yellowish-green surface is frequently pitted with holes. Another Galilee quarry yields a dark brown stone used as a covering for walls and columns. It must be polished and is expensive. The floors are covered with a very hard light brown marble from the north. It is shot through with white and brown veins, making a pleasant break in the monotonous expanse of floors.

Even Tiberias plays a role on the campus. Basalt, which is black and extremely hard, is quarried from pits near the Kinneret. It gives any building a rich, sombre tone. "River stones," three-inch round and oval pebbles from a wadi near Motza, are used to pave the patio of the Kaplan building. The pebbles are set in mortar. The amphitheatre is designed to prevent "blinding," the speakers' being hit in the eyes by the glaring reflections from polished white stone. With the exception of the material for the seats, which are of Kastel stone, all other stones were selected for their low reflecting properties. The floors and seats are of stones of different colours. The risers (seat supports) have been cast in concrete mixed with basalt chips. Within Jerusalem itself, the gigantic IL2m. cube-like structure, the Supreme Religious Centre, uses Kastel dolomite as its basic building stone. But the vast greyish expanse—which is to be flooded soon after its completion this spring—is relieved by Tiberias basalt. Dressed, the places in vertical columns outside, above and below the windows, it gives the illusion that the windows themselves are six stories high, soaring upward from the ground to the top floor projects outward). Inside, a variety of coloured stones are used. The entrance hall will be of grey and brown polished stone, while the pillars are covered with a lighter grey. In the well of the entrance hall, Mrs. Naomik Hancock who made the mosaic map of Jerusalem, is to work with stone as an artist works with oils, building a series of mosaics. (This is the last of a series of articles. The others appeared on November 21, 22, 27, and December 8.)

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The Public Advisory Council For Personal Compensation Claims From Abroad.